

ditions of society. The unfortunate man or woman that lives in a hovel will no more go to the churches of to-day, than the millionaire will go to the chapel in the "slums" and no amount of sentimentalism can change these conditions.

We do not only need churches among the poor, but also need preachers that are or can put themselves upon a level with their hearers. The young man of sobriety and respectability, brought up under the influence of Christian parents, whether rich or poor, educated in some theological school is scarcely ever able to work successfully among people that have been living lives of degradation and intemperance. He cannot realize the depth of their degradation and does therefore not know what means to apply to rescue them. Rich poetry, fine theories, nor even cold logic will not appeal to the senses of that class of people. They must in the main, be reached by a powerful display of the emotions and the influence of animal magnetism, or still better by the power of the Holy Ghost. Figuratively speaking, the preacher must stretch himself upon the (spiritually) lifeless bodies of his hearers as Elijah did upon the dead boy when he wanted to revive him. Nearly all those that successfully work among the unfortunate classes, have themselves come up from them and nearly all such are outside of the established churches. If it takes Episcopal, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist or even Brethren doctrine to save these people, nearly all of the lower classes with their leaders will be lost and that simply because of a lack of adaptability to existing conditions on the part of the churches.

The Salvation Army is the only organized church that is truly autonomous; that is not governed in any sense by the traditions, or conventionalities of surrounding churches, and her success is marvelous, having spread in a few years over nearly the whole civilized world, and though made up of the poorest classes of people she is now building in the city of New York a memorial building at an estimated cost of two hundred thousand dollars; why this great success? Simply because they are a free, self-governed people that have cut loose from all conventionalities and adapt themselves to the conditions of the people they try to save; it is not here meant to convey the idea that all churches should adopt the Army method of work, among many of different caste it would be altogether repugnant, but the proper thing for churches to do is to be as diversified in forms, as the masses are in their tastes. Besides the Salvation Army there are in all our large cities numbers of non-sectarian Gospel missions,

these are always found in very unassuming places frequently in abandoned liquor saloons, just such places into which the man from the gutter can go without feeling that he is on forbidden ground; these Missions are free from all restraints of creeds, or dogmas, in them the Gospel is expounded with power as it is understood by those who do the work, and while there is an entire absence of all form many are reclaimed and helped by their efforts, they are a power for good, but every one of them is a reflection upon organized churches, if the creeds of the churches are at all essential to salvation they ought to reach all classes of people regardless of station, or location.

There is not only a lack of adaptation among the lower classes, there is also a deadening conventionalism in churches generally, the same old hymns and tunes are sung, the same kind of sermons are preached, that people heard a hundred years ago, the prayers are often stereotyped and in some cases even printed and repeated, and re-repeated time after time year in and year out, and the thought of change would among some be regarded as sacrilege; these conventionalities are not in keeping with the spirit of the age in which we live and are largely the cause of the indifference in churches; there ought to be new hymns and new music founded upon the developments of the nineteenth century, as well as there was upon those of previous centuries; the railroad, the steam engine, the telegraph, the telephone and the thousand and one other developments of these later days contain many striking metaphors that the poet, and musician could use to good effort to convey beautiful sentiments and grand truth which would appeal readily to the senses because of our familiarity with those things. Christ in his day drew his parables from the familiar things of life, we should do the same thing now; during our civil war there were many inspiring songs founded on the events of that war which were used with great effect in the accomplishment of the object in view, so it should be in the churches' warfare against sin; we should draw inspiration from every passing event.

The pulpit discourses should not only be the conventional topical sermons on some well-known scriptural themes, but should embrace every question of economy, politics, science, and history, and the relations of those questions to christianity. So-called orthodoxy will of course object to such departures, and say "preach Christ and him crucified," forgetting that this entire world was made through, by and for Christ. John says, "All things were made by him, and without him was

not anything made, that was made." John 1: 3. Paul says concerning Christ, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Col. 1: 16, 17. Christ is inherently so thoroughly diffused through every sound principle, system or power that it is scarcely possible to intelligently consider any theme without finding him in it. All great public questions have some bearing upon the Church of Christ, either for better or worse, and all thinking people are interested in them. They are therefore vital and proper subjects for discussion in the pulpits and lecture rooms of our churches; the autonomous preacher will cut loose from the conventionalism of so-called orthodoxy and adapt himself to the requirements of his day and generation.

Religious autonomy ought to apply to individuals as well as churches, one ought to live a perfectly natural religious life without sham, or imitation in it; and yet a very large proportion of professing Christians do not so live. How many belong to the various churches in imitation of their parents? How many observe the ordinances of their respective churches without any natural, longing desire of their own to do so? How many church members never study the Bible at all, and therefore have no religion of their own, and are thus simply imitators of others? It is yet an unsolved problem what standing such professors will have in the judgment, and who will be held responsible for their lives. To the finite mind such conditions present inexplicable difficulties, but the infinite will no doubt know what to do with them; whatever that may be, it is infinitely better for each individual to live a life of his own, so that there will be no shifting of responsibility when the final test comes.

Briefly stated, the main contention in this article is that the churches, preachers and individual Christians should be free and independent from all traditions and conventionalities and adapt themselves to the requirements of all classes according to the intelligence of this generation. Such is the state of affairs in all other walks of life. And if the church would hold her own in the progress of events she must pursue the same course.

Do you know a book that you are willing to put under your head for a pillow when you lie dying? Very well; that is the book you want to study while you are living. There is but one such book in the world.—*Joseph Cook.*